

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SASMIT PATRA): The following hon. Members associated themselves with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member, Shri Sanjay Kumar Jha: Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu (Tamil Nadu) and Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla (Tamil Nadu).

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SASMIT PATRA): Shrimati Phulo Devi Netam. Not present. Shri Dorjee Tshering Lepcha.

Demand for Green Bonus and Special Package for Sikkim State

SHRI DORJEE TSHERING LEPCHA (Sikkim): Sikkim, nestled in the lap of Mount Khangchendzonga, the third highest peak in the world, is a green State with 82 per cent forest land and over 47 per cent forest cover despite over 30 per cent area under snow and rocks which is among the highest in the country. Over 31 per cent Protected Area Network, the highest in the country, boasts a lone National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site under the mixed category of nature and culture, first of its kind in India.

As the world's mega-biodiversity hotspot, Sikkim harbours 26 per cent of India's biodiversity within just 0.2 per cent of its area. Its 84 glaciers, 534 lakes, and rivers and mountains are crucial for maintaining water cycle and energy security for the nation and beyond.

Sikkim, India's first 100 per cent organic State, won the Future Policy Gold Award, 'Oscar for best policies', from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation in 2018; was declared India's cleanest state by NSSO in 2015; won India Today's State of the States Awards for Economy, Environment and Law & Order in 2021; and awarded Best State for Environment Education in 2024 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. Despite Sikkim's ecosystem services benefiting the nation and the world, it faces opportunity costs from land-use restrictions for conservation, its commitment to Nationally Determined Contributions & Sustainable Development Goals, and bears financial burdens from natural disasters like recent flash floods and GLOF (Glacial Lake Outburst Flood), disproportionately shouldering the cost of maintaining its natural treasure.

Therefore, I respectfully request the Government for a Green Bonus and Special Package to help Sikkim manage its financial burden and preserve the nation's vital natural resources.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SASMIT PATRA): The following hon. Members associated themselves with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member, Shri Dorjee Tshering Lepcha: Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu (Tamil Nadu), Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla (Tamil Nadu), Shri Chunnilal Garasiya (Rajasthan) and Shri Devendra Pratap Singh (Chhattisgarh).

Concern over Mismatched Skill Development

SHRI NARAIN DASS GUPTA (National Capital Territory of Delhi): Sir, India's growing population, particularly the rising working age segment, people in the age bracket of 15-59, which stood at 55.4 per cent in 1991 and projected to reach 65 per cent in the next Census, is proving to be an asset. But the attempt to leverage this demographic advantage is yet to succeed, as the youth are underprepared for industry demands. The employment rate has dipped to 46.8 per cent in second quarter of 2024, indicating a declining job market. While the Government claims India's low corporate tax rate (22 per cent) as a growth driver, this has not translated into job security, as companies continue laying off staff to prioritize profits, leveraging tax savings without accountability for hiring or job creation. Though some schemes like *Skill India*, *Make in India*, *Vocal for Local* have made some impact, yet it needs further acceleration. The skill development initiatives rolled out by the Government need to be reviewed as studies show that 33 per cent of India's educated youth remain unemployed due to mismatched skills. The current educational curriculum is outdated, and it needs comprehensive national strategy to align it with the evolving demands of industries like technology, green energy and manufacturing. The Government policies should bridge the gap of expected skill-set between the job-givers and the job-seekers. I urge the Government to look into it.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (DR. SASMIT PATRA): The following hon. Members associated themselves with the Special Mention made by the hon. Member, Shri Narain Dass Gupta: Shri A.A. Rahim (Kerala), Dr. John Brittas (Kerala), Dr. Kanimozhi NVN Somu (Tamil Nadu) and Shri M. Mohamed Abdulla (Tamil Nadu).

Issue of mismanagement during Manimahesh Yatra in Himachal Pradesh

डा. सिकंदर कुमार (हिमाचल प्रदेश) : महोदय, आपका बहुत-बहुत धन्यवाद कि आपने मुझे एक बहुत महत्वपूर्ण विषय पर बोलने का अवसर दिया है।